

CLAIMS

We claim:

1. A linear compression latch comprising:
 - a housing;
 - a lever handle rotatable by an operator between a first position and a second position, the lever handle being mounted in the housing;
 - a pawl mounted for substantially linear motion, the pawl being actuated by rotation of the lever handle and traveling substantially linearly between an open position to a closed position as the lever handle is rotated between the first position to second position.
2. A linear compression latch according to claim 1 wherein the pawl is mounted to travel between the open position along a first path and an intermediate position.
3. A linear compression latch according to claim 1 wherein the first path is linear.
4. A linear compression latch according to claim 2 wherein the pawl is mounted to travel in a second path in a direction substantially perpendicular to the first path between the intermediate position and the closed position.
5. A linear compression latch according to claim 4 wherein the second path is linear.
6. A linear compression latch according to claim 5 further comprising a carriage, the carriage being mounted for linear motion within the housing, the pawl being mounted within the carriage.
7. A linear compression latch according to claim 6 further comprising connection means for rotatably connecting the lever handle and the pawl.